

B

371.924

C24

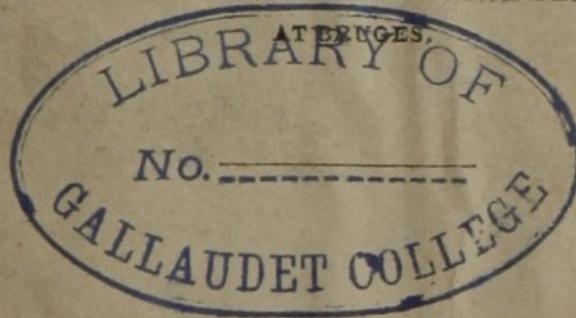
cop. 2

THE
HISTORY
OF A

BLIND DEAF-MUTE GIRL.

Translated from the French
OF
THE ABBÉ CARTON,

DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB



Printed at the Catholic Deaf and Dumb Institution,
ST. JOSEPH'S, CABRA.

1865.



LIBRARY

**COLUMBIA INSTITUTION
FOR THE DEAF**

CLASS

BOOK

Baker Collection

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.



FOR thousands of years there has existed on the face of the earth a class of human beings who have been set apart by the hard conditions of their physical conformation from the rest of their fellow-creatures. Even in the very heart of civilisation they were as savages—worse than savages,—for the savage has the traditions of his fathers, the interchange of ideas with his living compeers, the possible advent of some messenger from the more advanced world outside him, to guide him and instruct him. To the deaf-mute, as he existed in former days, civilisation was a dead letter. The past spoke not to his memory, the future appealed not to his imagination, the present was for him the present of the dumb animals around him ; food for hunger, and protection from the cold, the very utmost that it had to offer to his acceptance. It might have been merely the stunted intelligence of an idiot ; but it might also have, and perhaps, too often has been, an intellect large as that of any philosopher, fair as that of any poet, all-seeing and all-providing as that of any ruler whose name is written in the history of the world, that was thus imprisoned. It might have been a soul that yearned for love, for friendship, for interchange of thought and feeling, for higher aims and nobler things than this life could offer ;—but if so, it

yearned in vain ! It yearned in vain ; for God Himself entered not into the scheme of life of this creature that He had made in His own image and likeness. The deaf-mute neither loved God, served Him, nor obeyed Him, because he knew not, and could not be taught, who that God was whom he was bound to love, or in what things He would be obeyed and served. Thus was he separated both from God and man by a law more immutable than that which divided the leper from his nation,—a law which no man had made, and which no man therefore could either modify or unmake. God alone, who had set the barrier, could remove it ; and as He almost ever does in all His great acts of mercy towards the world, He chose to do so at a moment when that world least expected, and perhaps least deserved it. He called the deaf-mute to know Him, love Him, and adore Him, at a time when other men more privileged had overturned His altars, denied His existence, and bowed themselves down in stupid adoration before the so-called goddess of their misnamed reason. This was the moment which He chose ; and the man whom He deputed to the office He took from the very nation which had so insulted and denied Him.* M. Sicard worked no miracles, and yet he taught the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. The seed which he planted soon grew into a mighty tree, sending its offshoots through France, through Flanders, even to the distant continent of America, and within the last

* About the time of the French Revolution. M. Sicard, the inventor of the language for the deaf and dumb, was born (1742); and died 1822.

twelve years to Ireland. In this latter country it has borne fruit already ; though not, it is sad to say, the tithe of that which it might have yielded, if the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb established at Cabra had been better known and better aided. This, in fact, is just one of those cases in which charity must be ample in order to be efficient. No stinted alms can do its work, and for an obvious reason. The education of the deaf-mute is a double toil, and as such must needs make a double demand on the charity of the faithful. Other children come to the task of learning with minds already awakened to intelligence, and stored with a certain quantity of knowledge almost unconsciously acquired ; while the deaf-mute brings to the same amount of mental labour, an intellect which to all intents and purposes is still a blank. Other children have merely to learn to interpret language by means of letters ; while to the deaf-mute the one is as much a mystery as the other ; and he must not only be taught the thing itself, but the very idea and purpose of a language must, with infinite toil and trouble, be impressed upon his brain.

To give instruction such as this is the labour of a life, one half at least of which must be spent in learning how to give what the other half is devoted to imparting.

Naturally therefore, and because none but heroic souls would undertake such a task, the instruction of the deaf-mute has fallen almost entirely into the hands of religious men and women, who are trained especially for the purpose. Their work, as we have before observed, is twofold, but twofold likewise is the fruit it bears ; for while they instruct the deaf-mute, the deaf-mute in his

turn aids in the instruction of others as unfortunate as himself. The amount of good done by the Institute can therefore be only measured by the number of those whom it admits within its walls ; and that number again is necessarily and unfortunately limited by the scantiness of the funds which it possesses for their support. The census published in 1863 gives in round numbers 5653 as the complement of deaf-mutes existent at this moment in Ireland. Of these 1229 are returned as educated : and such of them as have been at Cabra have been taught various trades, and as shoemakers, tailors, gardeners, &c., are now enabled to earn an honest and independent existence for themselves. There remains, alas ! a far greater number (4424) who still exist a burden alike on society and themselves, either leading a vagrant life dependent on the charity of others, or vegetating in the workhouse. It is for them, and in their interest, that M. Carton's little pamphlet has been translated ; for we would fain awaken Catholic sympathy in their regard ; we would fain move Catholic hearts to such deeds of charity as may enable our Institute to receive them within its walls. England is as much interested as Ireland in our success, for Cabra is the only asylum of the kind in the three kingdoms in which Catholic deaf-mutes are educated in the religion of their parents. Thirty five English children have already found their way to the Institute ; doubtless many more would follow if Catholic England came forward nobly to aid Catholic Ireland in this work of unutterable love and mercy. We address you, therefore, in behalf alike of the English and the Irish ; do not, we entreat you, be deaf to our appeal ! We

plead for those who cannot plead for themselves, but whose silence surely speaks more eloquently than words. They are creatures and servants of God, as we are, and they know not, alas, as yet, even of His existence ! They have souls to be saved, as we have ; they are responsible, as we are, for all their actions ; and yet while we fight the world, the flesh and the devil in the conscious dignity of the Christian soldier, signed with the cross and strengthened with the sacraments, they have to combat, as the gladiators did of old, in all the unclothed weakness of poor human nature. We fight, and our wounds, if we receive them, are healed by the sacrament of penance,—they combat, consciously or unconsciously “as men beating the air,” and the first blow is mortal ; for how are they to seek for healing ? How, indeed ! since they know not even that they have been wounded in the battle.

By your alms alone can we hope to obtain for them such an education as, by withdrawing them from the darkness in which they are plunged at present, will enable them not only to provide for their own wants in this life, but to work out their salvation in the next. Give, therefore, we entreat you ! Deal with God as God deals with you ; and give generously and without reserve. Give, not that it may be returned to you in this life—not even that it may be accounted to you in the next—but give from a higher and a nobler motive still—the highest and the noblest that can actuate a creature.

Give, to win children to Jesus Christ, to satisfy His thirst for the salvation of mankind, and to cooperate in His great work for the redemption of the world; by ex-

tending its benefits to the soul of the deaf-mute. Oh, think how your heart will glow within you, and how joy will inundate your soul, if at the last day, in receiving the deaf-mute into His kingdom, He declare, as He most surely will, that to you and to your present aid He owes it, that for some at least of these poor creatures He has not suffered and died in vain !



3371924

C 24

col. 2

H I S T O R Y

OF A

Blind Deaf-Mute Girl.

CHAPTER I.

ANNA, the deaf, dumb, and blind girl, whose story I am about to relate, was born at Ostend, of poor but honest parents, in the year 1818. She was blind from her birth, but during the first years of her infancy appeared to have some sense of hearing. This, unfortunately, soon vanished, leaving her blind, deaf, and dumb ; one of the three persons thus trebly afflicted existing at this moment in the province of West Flanders. Losing both her parents while still an infant, she was brought up by her grandmother, who received aid for the purpose from the "Commission des Hospices" of the town. To the good offices of these gentlemen she is likewise indebted for the education she has since received ; for when I first proposed taking her into my establishment, both her aunt and her

grandmother were most unwilling to part with her, fearing, very naturally, that strangers would never give her the affectionate care which, in her helpless condition, she so abundantly required; they only yielded at last to the representations and entreaties of their charitable friends. Their love for this poor child who could never have been any thing but an anxiety and expense to them, was indeed most touching; and they wept bitterly when they parted from her; declaring, in their simple but expressive language, that I was taking away from them the blessing of their house. They were soon satisfied, however, that they had acted for the best; and having once convinced themselves of her improvement both in health and happiness, they never, to the day of their death, ceased to rejoice at the decision which they had come to in her regard. When Anna was first intrusted to my care, her relations, and every one else who knew her, supposed her to be an idiot, and this had been their principal reason for opposing me in my first efforts for her instruction. Poor themselves and ignorant, and earning their bread by the labour of their own hands, they had neither time or thought to bestow on the development of this intellect, closed as it was against all the more ordinary methods of instruction; and the child had been left, of necessity, to her own resources for occupation and amusement.

Few, indeed, and trivial these resources were ! Blind, and fearing even to move without assistance ; deaf, and incapable of hearing a syllable of the conversation that was going on around her ; dumb, and unable to communicate her most pressing wants, save by that unearthly and unwilling cry which the deaf-mutes are compelled to resort to, like animals in the moment of their utmost need,—the child had remained day after day seated in the same corner of the cottage. Knowing nothing of the bright sunshine, or the green field, or the sweet smell of flowers ; nothing of the sports of childhood or its tasks ; night the same as day in her estimation, excepting for its sleep ; winter only distinguished from summer by the sharper air without, and the increased heat of the wood-piled fire within, —no wonder that she seemed an idiot. * Her only amusement—the only thing approaching to occupation which her friends had been able to procure her—consisted, at first, in a string of glass-beads. These Anna amused herself with by taking off and putting on again at least twenty times a day ; and this and the poor meals, which she seemed to take without appetite or pleasure, were the only breaks in the twelve long hours of her solitary days. Some charitable person at last made her a present of a doll ; and with this doll she played, after her own fashion, until she was twenty years of

age. She never, in fact, lost her taste for it until she had succeeded in learning to knit ; then it was cast from her with disdain, and she never afterwards recurred to it for amusement.

Notwithstanding her enforced inaction, she managed to tear her clothes continually. Perhaps, poor child she found some relief from the tedium of her daily life in this semblance of an occupation, for she had an insuperable objection to changing her tattered garments ; and it was a long time before we could induce her to do so with a good grace. Once, however, accustomed to the change, she seemed to take pleasure in it, delighted in new clothes, and used often to come of her own accord to beg that the old ones might be washed. There was nothing very prepossessing in her external appearance ; at first, it was almost repulsive. She was of the ordinary height of a girl of her age ; but her hands were small and thin, from want of use, as those of a little child. When she first came to my establishment her head was bowed down on her neck from weakness ; she had sore eyes ; her face was covered with a cutaneous eruption ; she walked with difficulty, and appeared to dislike the exertion excessively. Afterwards, care and good feeding improved her very much. She acquired strength ; and the skin disease, which had been her chief disfigurement, entirely disappeared. I have no intention of describing all that she did and said (by signs), or all the pains and trouble

that she cost us in the early months of her residence among us. During that time, however, I kept a journal of her conduct ; which, as a history of her mental development, is so curious, that I venture to lay some extracts from it before my readers, the remainder being reserved for future publication.

I must begin by explaining my ideas as to the proper method to be pursued in instructing these unfortunates. I try, in the first place, to put myself in the place of a person deaf, blind, and dumb ; and then ask myself, "What do I know, what can I know, in such a state ?" In my first course of instruction, therefore, I make it a rule never to give the word until certain that the thing which that word expresses has been clearly understood. In the case of Anna there was an additional difficulty. Not only had she no preconceived idea of the use or nature of a word, but her blindness prevented her seeing the connexion between it and the substance it was intended to represent. Nor would it be sufficient for her full instruction that she should learn by the touch to distinguish one word from another ; she would also require to be taught the elements of which words were themselves composed. If I began by giving her words alone, she would never have learned to distinguish letters. If, on the other hand, I commenced with letters, without attaching any especial

idea to them, she would have been disgusted, and have left off at the second lesson. A letter, in fact, would have been nothing but a letter to her ; for there would be no means of making her comprehend that it was but the first step towards the knowledge I was desirous of imparting. I resolved, therefore, neither to try letters by themselves, nor whole words, in the first lesson which I gave her. It was in the Flemish language, of course ; but the method I pursued would be equally applicable to any other.

In order to give, at one and the same moment, the double idea of a letter and a word, I chose a letter which had some resemblance to the form I intended it to express, and gave it the significance of an entire word. For this purpose I fixed upon the letter *O*, and made her understand that this letter signified mouth ; in fact it is one of the four letters which express the word in Flemish,—*mond*, mouth. Afterwards I took a double *o* (*OO*), which are the first letters in the Flemish *oog*, eye. One *O*, then, signified mouth : two meant eyes. The lesson was easy ; she caught it in a moment ; and thus with two words and two ideas attached to them, her dictionary was commenced. It was quite possible, however, that as these letters represented to a certain extent, the objects of which they were the expression she might fall into the error of

supposing that all letters did the same ; and in order to prevent this mistake, I immediately added the letter *R* to her collection.

This not only became a new acquisition for her dictionary, but by forming with the two previous letters the Flemish word *oor* (ear), it became an easy transition between the natural expression dependent on the form, which she had already acquired, and the arbitrary, dependent on the spelling, which it was my object she should acquire. Proceeding on this principle, and always taking care to commence the lesson from a point already known, we lessened the difficulties, and made rapid progress. A cap, an apron, a ribbon, or gown, always interests the sex ; and, like any other girl, Anna valued them extremely. I took care likewise often to choose words expressive of any thing she liked, especially to eat ; and it was by the proper use of these words that she first convinced me how completely she had seized upon the meaning of my lessons. Whenever she was desirous of obtaining any little dainty, she used to point to the word in her collection ; and, of course, it was given to her immediately. Poor child ! her joy, when she found she could really make herself understood, was very touching ; and her surprise was nearly equal to her joy.

A person born blind does not naturally make signs ; for a sign addresses itself to the

sight, and of the faculty of sight they have no conception. A sign in relief, however—a sign which they can distinguish by the touch, and by means of which they can communicate with their fellow-men—must come to these benighted intelligences like a message of mercy from God Himself. We always gave Anna the object, in order to make her comprehend the word—the substantive, to explain the substantive. One day, not long after her arrival, her instructress gave her the word *egg*, placing one at the same time before her ; and Anna immediately made signs that she wished to eat it. She offered me at the same moment a small piece of money, which some one had given her, as if for the purpose of buying the food. The bargain was made at once ; and she ate the egg, while I pocketed the money. I quite expected she would try this over again, for she had some money, and was fond of eggs. The very next day, in fact, she searched the word out in her vocabulary, and brought it to her instructress, with an air that quite explained her meaning. I placed an egg before her ; she touched it—touched the word ; coaxed and patted the egg ; and at last burst into a fit of laughter, caused, no doubt, by pleasant astonishment at having so easily obtained her wish. I hoped and expected that she would propose to purchase, for I was anxious to find out if she had any real notion of the use of money. My hopes were fulfilled, for she of-

ferred at once her price of two centimes, with the evident intention of making a purchase. Much to her astonishment, however, this time I took both the money and the egg. At first she laughed, evidently thinking that I was only joking. I gave her time to comprehend that I was serious, and that, having taken both, I meant to keep them. She acquiesced at last with regard to the egg : it was mine, and I had a right to keep it if I liked ; but she was indignant that I did not return the money. She asked for it in every way she was capable of asking, and grew at last both red and angry at the delay. I had tried her sufficiently. It was high time to prove myself an honest man ; so I gave her back her money, and she restored me to her good graces. I was happy indeed to find so clear a sense of justice, so complete a knowledge of the value of "mine" and "thine," in a creature so defective in her animal organisation.

Once in possession of a little stock of words, Anna was never weary of augmenting it, and she soon found out a way of compelling us almost to satisfy her wish. She would take the hand of her mistress, and with it imitate the action of writing, by making points upon the paper with the finger. If her wishes were complied with, she was delighted ; but if, to try her, the mistress pretended to hesitate, then Anna took the matter into her own hands, and positively refused to do any thing else. Every other employment sug-

gested to her would be indignantly rejected, and she would persist in asking over and over again for the word she wanted, never resting or letting any one else rest until she got it. The nuns, of course, always ended by complying with her desires ; and it would be hard to say which felt most delight,—the blind girl, who had succeeded in adding to her small stock of knowledge, or the religious, who by the aid of Providence had enabled her to do so.

A mother who hears for the first time the low stammering of her child can alone form a conception of all one feels at such a moment ; for God is very good, and when He imposed upon society the task of instructing the ignorant, He attached an ineffable delight to the accomplishment of that duty.

When Anna knew how to read and understand about forty substantives, I taught her the manual alphabet, and from that moment I could test her knowledge with unfailing exactitude. She first read the word with her fingers, and then repeated it by means of the dactylography ; it was a lesson in reading and writing both. She was soon sufficiently advanced to venture upon verbs. I began with the imperative mood ; not only because it is the simplest form of the verb, but also because I myself would have to use it in giving her the lesson. She seized with wonderful facility upon the relative positions of the substantive and verb.

I always made her perform the action signified by the verb which she had learned, and thus the lesson became quite an amusement to her. However silly in appearance might be the association between the verb and substantive, she never failed to apprehend it ; and when told to do any thing ridiculous or out of the common way, she enjoyed the fun, and never failed to execute the commission to the best of her ability. If I told her to walk upon the table, she would take off her shoes, climb up and walk cautiously upon it ; if told to eat the chair, after a minute's hesitation as to the best manner of complying with the order, she would take it up and pretend to devour it. One day she was terribly embarrassed by some one writing the following phrase : " Throw your head on the floor." She read the sentence over and over again to make sure that she was not mistaken, laughed very much, and then suddenly growing serious, shook her head, as much as to say the thing was absolutely impossible. At last, however, and as if to finish the business, she took her head in both her hands, and made a gesture as if to fling it on the floor. Having done this, she evidently felt that nothing more could be expected from her, and showed herself both pleased and proud at having understood the phrase, and found so easy a method of getting out of the difficulty.

She distinguished very readily between the verbs "to lay down" and "to throw down," clearly

comprehending that the one action was to be done with vivacity, the other with caution ; and it was curious to watch her perplexity when commanded to throw down any thing liable to be broken. She knew well what would be the consequence of the command, and you could see the questioning that went on in her own mind as to how it could be accomplished with least damage to the article in question. She would begin by feeling all along the ground, and trying to form an exact idea of the distance it would have to fall ; and then at last she would throw it down with a mixture of care and yet of caution, which showed she was perfectly aware of the mischief she was doing.

The moment she thoroughly understood the imperative, we had only to add her name or that of one of the Sisters to produce the indicative ; and then, by changing Anna into I, she passed easily to the pronouns, as thus : " Strike the table ;" " Anna strikes the table ;" " I strike the table." I had at first omitted the article ; but I soon perceived my mistake. We have no means of teaching a deaf-mute the reason for preceding a substantive by an article ; and still more impossible would it be to give any plausible explanation of the distinction between the genders. Habit does this for each of us when we learn our mother tongue ; and habit and frequent repetition did it so well for Anna, that now she rarely, if ever, makes any mistake.

When she had advanced thus far, I made her observe that by adding the letters *en*, which constitute our Flemish plural, several of the same sort of substantives were intended to be expressed ; and passing from this to numbers, I gave her a lesson in numeration. She readily seized upon both ideas ; and constant practice soon made her perfect in their application.

Verbs such as *jeter*, to throw down, *poser*, to lay down, naturally introduced the use of prepositions to express the mode in which the verb acts upon the substantive. This enabled me to make various combinations with words known to her already ; and I found it of great use to place the same word in such different positions in a phrase as to alter entirely, or at least modify, the meaning. The last lesson which she received was to make use of and understand the meaning of the pronouns "my," "your," "our," and the conjunction "and." We have also made her comprehend the use and meaning of adjectives expressive of forms, as "square," "round," &c., as well as the physical and mental state of being implied in the words "good," "bad," "sick," "well," &c. She makes such phrases as the following, and reads them easily when they are given to her in writing : "Give me my knitting;" "My work is on the table;" "My apron is square."

One last observation I must make about the pronouns. The third person singular or plural

would have been difficult to Anna, since being blind, she could not have distinguished whether the action spoken of had been done by one person or by several ; by " him," in fact, or by " them."

The pronouns which she can most readily comprehend are the first and second ; and to these I generally confine her. For " he" or " they" I have substituted " one ;" " One strikes the table."

Anna might have been taught the others ; but she would often probably have been mistaken in their application, and would perhaps have ended by supposing that there was no positive rule in their regard, and that they might be used as it were at random.

People learn willingly only what they can clearly comprehend ; and if children dislike instruction, the fault is almost always with the master. If the latter would but bring his intelligence to the level of his pupils, he might be almost certain of their attention.

To sum up the whole, I will give the order in which I taught her the different parts of speech necessary for the knowledge of a language. The substantive, because, being itself an object, it falls more immediately beneath the recognition of the senses ; the verb, because by the verb alone we speak, and without it there could be no language ; the preposition, because it indicates the nature of the action expressed by the verb ; and finally, the adjective and the adverb.

I had many reasons for keeping back these two last to the end. Neither of them is essential to a phrase, which can be complete without them. Anna would have been much retarded in her progress if I had stopped to teach her the attributes of words, when words themselves were what she wanted. She could learn language only by use and habit ; and it was of the highest importance that she should acquire that habit as speedily as possible. I threw aside therefore, without hesitation, all that could embarrass her progress, and confined myself, in the first instance, to such things as it was absolutely essential she should know, in order to be able to converse at all. It may be asked why I taught her to make phrases by means of whole words, instead of giving her the letters of the alphabet and teaching her to make words themselves. The result of the mode I did adopt must be my answer. Anna had already a clear idea of language ; all her acquisitions in the way of words are classed in her mind as in a dictionary, and ready to come forth at a moment's notice. The reason for this rapid progress is very plain. It is far less troublesome to take a whole word, and put it in the grammatical order it ought to occupy, than to be obliged to make the word itself by means of separate letters.

She had need of all the attention she could possibly bestow to learn the elements of a phrase ; and it would have been imprudent to weaken

that attention by directing it also to the elements of words. I divided difficulties in order to overcome them : this was the secret of my method, and the cause of its success. My lessons were also nearly almost or entirely an amusement to her : and sometimes I composed a phrase which she first read, and acted afterwards. Sometimes it was I who performed the action, while she gave me an account of what I had done in writing.

It was a lesson at once in reading and in writing, in hearing and in speaking ; and the moment we had got thus far, communication by means of language was established between us.

I had given my lessons at first by words or phrases written in a book ; but now, to test more perfectly the knowledge she had acquired, and to prevent her reading becoming a mere matter of form and guess-work, I cut all her phrases into words, gummed them upon cardboard, and threw them pell-mell into a box, from which she had to take out every separate word that she required for a phrase. This new exercise vexed her very much at first ; but if it was tedious, it was also, sure. By degrees she became accustomed to it, and at last seemed to prefer it to the book, probably because it admitted of greater facilities for varying her phrases. Nevertheless it was troublesome work ; and I was curious to see if Anna would seek, of her own accord, to arrange her words in such a way as to avoid the trouble

of hunting through the whole mass for every separate one she wanted. It seemed not unlikely, for she was very ingenious ; and so, in fact, it happened.

From time to time I observed that she put aside certain words, and kept them separate from the others ; and it was impossible to mistake her exultation when these selected words were called for in her lesson. Of course I saw them as she put them by ; and, in order to encourage her, I managed to introduce them pretty often into our conversations. Acting also upon this hint, I had a drawer divided into small compartments placed in the table at which she took her lessons. Each compartment was intended for a separate class of words, but she was permitted to arrange them according to her own ideas ; and the moment a word had been examined and understood, she placed it in the compartment to which she imagined it belonged. Nouns, pronouns, verbs, articles,—each had their separate partition ; but I observed, with delight, that when I gave her the verb “to drink,” instead of placing it with the other verbs, she put it at once into the compartment she had destined for liquids. Having remarked that it was always employed with these substantives, it naturally struck her that its proper place would be among them. To casual observers this may seem but a trifling thing to mention, but it was an act of reasoning ; and in their half-mu-

tilated natures the whole power of instruction hangs so entirely on the capacity for passing by an act of reason from one fact to another, from the known to that which is still unknown, that every indication which a pupil gives of possessing such capacity is hailed with delight by the teacher as an assurance of further progress. Without it he knows that instruction would be impossible.



CHAPTER II.

WHEN ANNA was first introduced into my establishment, she evidently comprehended that she had fallen among strangers. She

brought us her poor playthings, and insisted on our examining them attentively, for she was a baby still; a baby of twenty years of age indeed, but as anxious to be caressed and as requiring of notice as a child of two years old. When led in the evening to her bedside, she immediately began to undress herself, and the next morning rose gaily, showing herself much pleased with the good bed in which she had passed the night. She made a little inclination of the head to the Sister who waited on her, as if to salute her. At breakfast we observed that she ate with more cleanliness and propriety than is usual among the blind.

Her first regular lesson was to knit; and we found it far less difficult to teach her the stitch itself than to habituate her to work steadily for a long time together. She had evidently no idea of making it the regular occupation of the day. She would begin by knitting a little; then she would undo or tear up all that was already done; and this would happen over and over

again, at least twenty times a day. It was weary work at first ; but after a time we managed to turn this dislike for continuous occupation into a means of teaching her more important things. The moment she threw aside her work, we took it up, and pretended to insist upon her continuing it ; and then at last, when we saw that she was quite vexed and wearied out by our solicitations, we used to offer her letters. She would take them, and, evidently to avoid further worry, begin to study them ; but the letters like the knitting, were soon flung aside, and the work once more was put into her hands. In this way, and while she fancied she was only indulging in her own caprices, we were advancing steadily towards our object—training her to occupation, and giving her the means of future communication with her fellow-creatures. We also discovered that it was quite possible to pique her out of her idle habits ; for one day in the earlier period of her education, when she happened to be more than usually idle and inattentive, her mistress led her towards a class of children busily employed in working, and said to her by signs, “ These little children work : and you, who are twice their size, do you wish to sit there doing nothing ? ” From that time we had less trouble with her : and once she had learned to knit well and easily, this kind of work seemed to become a positive necessity to her. She delighted in feeling with her fingers the progress she was making,

and the needles were scarcely ever out of her hands. When Sunday came, she asked as usual for her knitting, and was terribly disappointed when she found that it was withheld. I took the opportunity to give her an idea of time—a very important point in her future education ; so I said to her, “ You shall not knit *to-day* ; but after having slept once more—*to-morrow* in fact—the needles shall be given to you again.” I foresaw this to be an explanation that would need repeating ; and accordingly, the very next Sunday, she asked again for her knitting, and was again refused. She was vexed at first, but grew calm directly I had assured her should have it “ *on the morrow*. ”

Many weeks afterwards, and when she seemed quite to understand that work on this day was forbidden, she came with a very serious countenance and demanded her knitting ; then bursting into a fit of laughing, made signs that she knew she was not to knit on that day, but to-morrow she should have her work again. She obtained a knowledge of the past and future much sooner than she did of the present, using the signs expressive of the two first long before she made an attempt even at the latter.

It was a matter of great importance that she should understand them all ; therefore I not only introduced them over and over again in our conversations, in order to render her familiar with them, but I watched her carefully to see that she

made a right use of them in her communication with her companions. A circumstance at last occurred which satisfied me that she was perfect in the lesson. On the Feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga she went with the other children to a church where the festival was being celebrated. On her return she expressed her gratitude for the pleasure she had received, and the next morning I observed that she told every one she met that "yesterday she had been to such a church ;" while the day afterwards I perceived that in telling the same story she made the sign of yesterday twice over,—a proof how perfectly she comprehended the nature and division of time.

For a long time after she began to reside with us, she never mentioned either her grandmother or aunt, probably because she was so completely absorbed by the lessons of her new existence as to have no time to think of them. Gradually, however, they came back to her recollection, and then she spoke of them with gratitude and affection. She began also to compare her present state with her past, evidently considering the change for the better in her physical and mental being as due to the care that has been bestowed on her here. She has twenty little ways of expressing her gratitude. "My face was all over blotches," she says by signs ; "I could neither write nor walk : now I can hold myself upright, and I can read, and know how to knit." This consciousness, however, does not at all interfere with her affec-

tion for her grandmother; and when the old woman died she grieved for some time bitterly. What idea does the word "death" bring to the mind of this child? I know not; but when we told her about her grandmother, her mistress made her lie down on the floor, and then reminded her of a child who had died in the establishment about a year before; after which we explained to her that the body would be laid in the ground, and be seen upon earth no more. She wept a great deal at first; but suddenly drying her tears knelt down, making signs to her mistress and companions that they should do the same; and, that there might be no mistake about her meaning, she held up her rosary, to show them they must pray. She did not forget her poor grandmother for a considerable time, and every morning made it a point to inquire from her companions if they also had remembered her that day. One of her aunts died about the same time, leaving to Anna as a legacy a portion of her wardrobe. Anna's attention instantly became concentrated upon this new acquisition, and gowns and handkerchiefs underwent a minute and searching examination. The gowns pleased her exceedingly; so also did some woollen pelerines, which she instantly observed must be intended for the winter. At that moment she was a complete woman, with all a woman's innate love of dress and desire for ornamentation. "Are there not also earrings?" she asked anxiously; and being answered in the

negative, she expressed clearly by her gestures that it was a pity: it was quite a pity.

Anna soon came to understand that I was her master, and she attached herself in consequence more strongly to me than to any one else, for she perfectly appreciated the service she had received. One day after a lesson, at which I had kept her until she thoroughly understood it, she showed herself more than usually grateful. She took my hand and kissed it repeatedly, gratitude and affection beaming in her face, and then drawing her mistress towards her, she made her write, "I love M. Carton." I, on my part, was enchanted to find that she thus, of her own accord, asked for words to express the sentiments of the heart; and I felt not a little proud of being the object by whom this latent feeling had first been called into expression. But if Anna loves me, she also fears me. In the beginning of her education I was the only person about her who had strength enough to prevent her scratching or kicking—exercises to which she was rather addicted when put in a passion. She likewise knew that it was I who imposed any penance on her, and that when she was compelled to remain without handkerchief or cap in the schoolroom, it was to M. Carton she was indebted for the humiliation. One day in a fit of anger, she tore her cap; and her mistress, as soon as she was calm enough to understand her, remonstrated with her, telling

her at the same time that I should be informed of her misdeeds. To escape the punishment which she knew must follow, she had recourse to the other children, acknowledged her fault to them, and begged them to kneel down and join their hands, in order to obtain her pardon. Not one of the children, whether among the blind or deaf mutes, misunderstood her signs, and this was one of the actions of Anna which astonished me the most. Some one was foolish enough once to tell her that I was going away for some days, and she took advantage of the chance to behave extremely bad. They made the sign by which she understands that they mean me, and by which they generally contrived to frighten her into submission ; but it was all in vain. She laughed in the face of her mistress, and told her she was quite aware that I should not be back for three days. They have taken good care ever since not to let her know when I am absent, though it probably would make no difference now, for her character has completely changed since those early days, and it is six months at least since she has indulged in any thing like a fit of passion. After me, her greatest affection is reserved for my friend M. Cauwe. She is quite delighted when he comes and feels his face all over to make sure that it is he. If she has a new dress, he must feel and remark it ; if she learns a new phrase, or a new kind of work, it must be shown to him immediately, in order that she may receive his praise ;

and if by any chance his visit has been delayed, she is sure to perceive it, and to inquire into the cause of his absence.

Anna is also very fond of all the younger deaf and dumb children. She takes them on her knees, carries them in her arms, pets and punishes them, and adopts a general and motherly air of kindness and protection towards them. One of them the other day happened to be in an exceedingly troublesome and tormenting mood. Anna could not keep her quiet, or prevent her teasing ; and at last, rather than lose her temper, and strike her, as she would formerly have done, she left her usual place, and went to sit at the opposite side of the room. In fact, she never now attempts to attack any of her companions, though she does not fail in some way or other to pay back any provocation she has received. She takes nothing belonging to others, but attaches herself strongly to her own possessions, and is particularly indignant if they attempt to meddle with her objects for instruction. One of the blind children happened to take a sheet of her writing in points, in order to try and read it ; but Anna was no sooner aware of the theft than she angrily reclaimed it. The next day the same child begged as a favour that she would lend her a sheet, in order to practise her reading ; but Anna curtly refused, observing, that yesterday she had taken it without leave, and that to-day she certainly should not have it even for the ask-

No. -

ing. Anna's chief pet and charge among the little children is a child blind and maimed of one arm called Eugenie. When this little thing was coming first to the establishment Anna was told of it, and the expected day named for her arrival. She immediately set to work and made all sorts of arrangements in her own mind for the reception of the new child. The mistress would of course teach it to read ; but it would have a seat beside Anna, and with the companion whom she already had, there would be three to walk and amuse themselves together. It so happened that Eugenie did not arrive on the expected day. Anna was quite downcast in consequence ; and when at last it did appear, it instantly became the object of all her tenderest petting and endearment. She led it to its seat, tried to make it understand all that it would have to do and learn, and at last, when she touched its little arm, and found that it was maimed, and incapable of being used, she burst into tears, and was for a long time inconsolable ; I tried to find out the cause of her grief, and in what she considered the greatness of the child's misfortune to consist, and she immediately directed my attention to the fact that the child would never be able to learn to knit. The power of occupation had been such an inestimable boon to herself, that she naturally felt any inability on that score to be the most intolerable misfortune that could befall a human being. When we assured her that Eugenie would be able to knit

as well and easily as she did herself, she became calm. The next day, however she was discovered trying to knit with both hands shut, as if they had been maimed like the blind child's, and she immediately made her mistress observe that in such a state she could neither knit, blow her nose, or dress herself, ending all by expressing the immense happiness she felt at possessing the free use of her hands. Providence has provided an antidote to every misfortune. The blind child pities the deaf-mute, the deaf-mute sighs over the blind, and the blind deaf and dumb girl feels her heart filled with inexpressible compassion for one deprived of the free use of her hands. Anna kept her word, and took great care of the little Eugenie. She placed herself indeed somewhat in the position of a mother to the child, watched over its conduct, examined its work, and went so far as occasionally to administer a slight correction. If the weather was cold, she never went to bed herself without feeling that Eugenie was well covered up, and giving her her blessing: a good deed she always took care to make known to me in the morning. When first the little thing came, it was rather refractory and disinclined to submit to rules, and the mistress acquainted Anna with the fact. "Does not she like to knit?" asked Anna. "It is not with that," answered the mistress, "but with her reading lesson, that she will not take pains." Anna immediately went over to the child, to try and persuade her to fulfil her

duty. She took her hand, laid it on the book, remained for at least a quarter of an hour persuading and encouraging her ; and then, perceiving that she had began to be really attentive bade her get up and ask pardon of her mistress for her past disobedience.

Another day she examined the child's knitting, and finding it badly done, shook her head gravely, in sign of disapprobation. She then took Eugenie's hand, made her feel with her own fingers the long loose stitches she had made ; and making her kneel down in the middle of the room, pinned the work to her back, with threats of even more serious punishment in the future. Just then the mistress joined the class, and found Eugenie in tears and on her knees, with her work pinned behind her. "Eugenie," she asked, "what are you doing there, and why do you cry?" "The deaf and dumb girl has punished me, because my knitting was badly done," said the child ; "and she says, when M. Carton comes in, he will throw a glass of water in my face." In order to prevent this terrible assault, the mistress advised her to ask pardon of Anna, which she immediately did ; but the latter felt it due to the dignity of the situation to allow herself to be entreated a long time before she consented to grant it. But though Anna considered it a part of her duty to punish Eugenie for her idleness, she was always otherwise very gentle to the child.

CHAPTER III.

A
NNA likes dainty food, and is very fond of fruit. I suspected, however, when first she came, that she had not an idea of the way in which it was procured. She had been so shut up in her old home, that nature was still an unexplored page to her; and blind, deaf and dumb as she was, it was only through the fingers that even now this poor child could ever be taught to read and comprehend it. It is not difficult, therefore to imagine her astonishment and joy at each new discovery of this kind which she makes. One day I led her to an apricot, and made her feel and examine it all over. She dislikes trees extremely, probably because in her solitary excursions she must have often hurt herself against them. She obeyed me, however, though very languidly and unwillingly at first; but I never saw such astonishment on any face before as I did on hers, when after a short delay, I took her hand and laid it on an apricot. She clasped her hands delightfully together, then made me touch the fruit, as if she expected that I also would be astonished; and then recommenced her examination of the tree, returning over and over again, with an expression of intense joy over all her person, to the fruit which she had

so unexpectedly discovered. I permitted her at last to pull the fruit and eat it, and she kissed my hand most affectionately, in token of gratitude for the immense favour I had conferred upon her. After class-time she returned alone to the garden; and as I foresaw that the discovery of the morning would not be sterile, but that, once put on the track, she would continue her explorations on her own account, I watched her closely. So, in fact, it happened.

She was no sooner in the garden than she began carefully to examine all the plants and trees around her, and it was amusing beyond any thing to watch her making her way cautiously among the cabbages, touching the leaves and stems, and trying with great care and prudence to discover if this plant also produced apricots. I suffered her to continue this exercise for a little time in vain; then coming to the rescue, after making her comprehend that cabbages, though good in themselves to be eaten, did not bear apricots, I led her to various kinds of fruit-trees growing in the garden. I did not name any of them to her then, for I knew that in time she would learn to distinguish one from the other, and she had still so much to discover of nature and her ways, that I did not like to delay her by dwelling on distinctions which were, comparatively speaking, of little consequence to her in that early stage of her education. This little course of botany we continued throughout the year. She was taught to

observe the fall of the leaf, encouraged to examine the tree when entirely bereft of foliage, and when the spring-buds began to swell she was once more brought to touch them, and made to understand that they were about to burst again into leaf and flowers. The moment the leaves were visible she inquired of one of her companions if the tree was going to bear fruit likewise; and receiving for answer that it would certainly do so whenever the weather should become sufficiently warm. Satisfied with this information, she waited some time with patience; but a few very warm days chancing to occur in the month of May, she reminded her companion of what she had been told, and inquired eagerly if the fruit was at last come.

In this way, during all that summer, she found constant amusement in watching the progress of the different fruit-trees, and I found her one day examining a pear with great attention. She had not met with one before, so it was quite a discovery to her, and she begged me to let her have it in order that she might show it to her mistress and learn its name. With all her love of fruit, however, I must record it to the honour of this poor child that she never attempted to touch it without permission; and that having been guided once to a tree by one of her deaf-mute companions, and incited to gather the fruit, she made a very intelligible sign that it must not be done without an order from me. On another occasion I gave

her a bunch of currants and told her to eat them; but the moment she touched them she discovered that they were not ripe, and made signs to me that she "must wait for a few days longer, and that then they would be good to eat."

Her delicacy of touch is in fact surprising. I have often effaced her letters, and flattened them with my nail until it seemed impossible to discover even a trace of them, and yet with her finger she has never failed in following out the form.

She often also finds pins and small pieces of money, and picks them up when walking. She is very proud on these occasions, and takes good care to inform any one who comes near her of the fact. She is very active now, and always ready to go and look for any thing or person that she wants; and if she does not succeed in finding them she engages one of her companions to aid her in the search. She seemed indeed always to suspect that we knew better than she did what was passing around us: though it was probably some time before she asked herself what the nature of her own deficiency might be. A day came, however, upon which she obtained some clearer knowledge on the subject; and this was the way it happened. She had dropt one of her knitting-needles, and, after a vain attempt to find it for herself, she was obliged to have recourse to her mistress, who immediately picked it up and gave it back to her. Anna appeared to reflect earnestly for a moment, and then drawing the Sister towards her

writing-table, she wrote : " Theresa," naming one of the pupils of the Institution,—" Theresa is deaf ; Lucy is deaf ; Jane is blind ; I am blind and deaf ; you are—;" and then she presented her tablets to the Sister, in order that the latter might explain to her the nature of that other faculty which she possessed, and which enabled her to find so easily any thing that was lost.

This was a problem which had evidently occupied her for a long time ; and with her head bent forward and fingers ready to seize the slightest gesture, Anna waited eagerly for the answer by which she hoped the mystery would be solved to her at last. In a second or two the embarrassment of the mistress was nearly equal to the eagerness of the pupil ; but after a minute's hesitation she, with great tact, resolved to repeat the action which had caused Anna's question. Making the blind-mute walk down the room with her, she desired her once more to drop her needle and then to pick it up again, after which she wrote upon the board, "The needle falls ; you touch the needle with your hand ; you pick it up with your fingers." Anna read these words with an air which seemed to say "I know all that already ; but there must be something more ; and so there was:

Her mistress made her once more drop her needle ; and then, just as Anna was stooping to pick it up, she dragged her, in spite of the poor girl's resistance, so far from it that she could not

touch it either with her hands or feet. "It is ever so far away," Anna said, in her mute language; and stooping down to the floor, she stretched out her hand as far as ever it would go in a vain attempt to reach it. The Sister waited until she was a little pacified, and then wrote: "The needle falls." Anna answered: "Yes." "The needle is far off," the Sister wrote again, and Anna replied: "Alas, it is." "Sister N. cannot touch the needle with her hand." "Nor I either," Anna wrote in answer. "Sister N. can touch the needle with her eyes." Then followed a mimic scene in which the thing expressed by words was put into action. Anna understood at last, but evidently in order to make certain that she did, she desired the Sister to guide her hand once more to the fallen needle. Her mistress complied with the request, and Anna was convinced. The experiment was repeated over and over again. Anna threw her needle into various places, and then asked the Sister if she could touch it without stooping. "Yes," replied her mistress; "I touch the needle with my eyes." "Can you pick it up with your eyes?" asked Anna. The Sister made her feel that her eyes were not fingers; and then once more picking up the needle she gave it to Anna, to be satisfied that she at last understood the nature of the faculty which her instructress possessed and which was wanting in herself.

From that time she invariably made a distinction between the blind children and those

who were merely deaf-mutes. She had always hitherto been ready enough to avenge herself on any of her companions who struck her, whether accidentally or on purpose. Now, if she found it was a blind child who had done so, she would of her own accord excuse her, saying, "She is blind ; she cannot touch me with her eyes when I am at a distance from her." In the same manner, if she lost any thing, she would ask the first deaf-mute whom she met to help her to look for it, while she never attempted to seek a similar service from any of the children whom she knew to be blind. She showed her knowledge of the difference between the two classes most distinctly upon one occasion, when her knitting having got irretrievably out of order, she communicated her perplexity to the blind child at her side. The latter wanted to take it from her in order to arrange it : but Anna drew it back, and, touching first the eyes of the child and then her own, as if she would have said, " You also are blind, and can do no better than myself," she waited quietly until she could give it to the mistress to disentangle for her.

Anna delights in telling her companions all her adventures, though she takes care never to mention her faults or their punishment. She will acknowledge the former if taxed with them, but she does not like to be reminded either of the one or of the other. " I have done my penance," she says : " It is past, you must not speak of it

any more." With this exception, she tells all that she has done or intends to do ; and she is enchanted beyond measure when she can inform them that she has succeeded in playing a trick on her mistress. She will tell the story with infinite glee, and always contrives exceedingly well to put the thing in its most ridiculous light before them.

She was fond of milk, and observed, or was told, one day that a cup of milk had been given to a child who was sick. The next morning, while in chapel, she burst into tears. Her mistress led her from the class, and asked what was the matter. She coughed, showed her tongue, held out her hand, that the mistress might feel her pulse ; in fact, she was as ill as she could be, and excessively thirsty. A cup of milk was brought ; and the medicine was so good, that five minutes afterwards she managed to eat the breakfast with an excellent appetite. During the recreation that followed, she took care to explain to her companions the means by which she had procured herself the milk. A few days afterwards she recommenced the comedy, and played it so well, that, thinking she really was ill, her mistress desired her to go to bed. This was more than she wished for ; but she went up stairs, trusting, no doubt, that something would happen to extricate her from the dilemma. Her mistress went to see her ; and finding her sitting on the side of the bed, asked why she did not

get into it, as she had been desired. "Madame," said Anna, "it is very cold, but I should get warm if you would give me a cup of milk; that would cure me in no time; and a little bread and butter with it would also do me good." The Sister then perceived how the case really stood, and answered promptly, "If you will get into bed you shall have the milk, but not the bread and butter. If, on the contrary, you prefer to go down stairs, you shall have the bread and butter, but not the milk. Which do you choose?" "Both," quoth Anna. But as both were not to be had, she was obliged to content herself the amusement of telling her intended trick to her companions, which she did with many regrets that it had not been successful.

But though Anna likes to tell all these little schemes and adventures to any one who will listen to her; and though, if taxed with them by her mistress, she is quite ready to acknowledge them with a laugh,—it is far otherwise when the action itself contains any thing seriously contrary to honesty or justice. In that case she takes good care to be silent on the subject; and if silence is impossible, she endeavours, in all manner of ways, to explain it away or excuse it.

In this way she is always being ingenious in finding excuses for her faults. Her mistress once complained of her knitting, and she immediately held up her needles, which were bent, as if she would have said, "How is it possible to

knit with such needles as these?" Another day, feeling more idle than usual and wishing to remain in bed, she made them count her pulse, and begged by signs that they would send immediately for M. Verte, the physician of the house. We knew well it was only a trick to stay a little longer in bed, and she was the first to acknowledge it as soon as she had risen.

I like to watch her when she fancies herself alone, as I then often find in her most trivial actions a something interesting or suggestive for her future improvement. I discovered her once alone in the classroom, and busily engaged in examining every corner of the desks. All at once she went towards the black table on which the deaf-mutes write their exercises, and taking a piece of chalk, began to trace lines upon it at random. I was curious to know what discovery she was trying to make, and in a few minutes I perceived it. As soon as she had traced her lines, she passed her hands over them to see if she could read them. She was aware that her companions read upon this board; and as she knew of no other method of reading than by letters in relief, she naturally supposed that the lines she had traced would be sufficiently raised to enable her to do so. For a few minutes she continued thus trying to follow with her finger the chalk-lines she made; but finding considerable difficulty in doing so, she at last returned to her book, compared the letters in it with the lines

on the board, and evidently pronounced a verdict in favour of the former. I could see in fact, that she was quite delighted with its apparent superiority, and she never attempted to write on the black board again.

She often makes signs that seem to indicate an inexplicable knowledge of things of which it is impossible she can naturally have any real perception. She was born blind; she can look at the sun without blinking, and the pupil of the eye is as opaque as the skin. Nevertheless her mistress happening to ask her one day why she had left off her work, she answered that it was too dark to work any longer, and that she must wait for a light.* In chapel, also, she has evidently impressions which she does not receive elsewhere. She likes to go there; often asks to be permitted to do so, and while in it always remains in an attitude and with an expression of face which would indicate a profound consciousness of the presence of God. One of her companions once told her that I was ill. Anna perceived that the child was crying; "I will not cry," she said immediately, "but I will pray;" and she actually did go down on her knees, and remained in that position for nearly a quarter of an hour. She told me this herself, and I was enchanted; for who can doubt that God held Himself honoured

* She possibly may have learned the expression from some of the deaf-mutes not blind. [Tr.]

by the supplicating attitude of His poor mutilated creature? And yet what passes in the mind of this child during the moments which she spends in the attitude of prayer? What is her idea of God? What is the language of her heart when she thus places herself in solemn adoration in His presence? What is in fact, her prayer? I know not: it is a mystery,—yet a mystery which I trust she will some day find words to explain to me herself. One thing alone is certain;—there is *that* in her heart and mind which has not been placed there by man, and which tells her there is a Father and a God for her in heaven.

CONCLUSION.

Extract of a letter from the Abbe Carton, announcing the death of the Blind Deaf-Mute, Anna Timmermans, after a residence of twenty-one years in the Establishment at Bruges:—

Bruges, Sept. 26, 1859.

GENTLEMEN,—I write to you in deep affliction, for death hath this day deprived me of my blind mute Anna Timmermans, whom you may remember to have seen at the establishment last year.

She was just forty-three years of age: and twenty-one of these had been passed at my asylum. God has taken her from this life to bestow upon her a better, and His holy will be done! It was a great mercy to her; but I shall regret her all my lifetime, even while re-

joicing in her present happiness, and feeling most thankful for that love and knowledge of Almighty God, to which through all the physical difficulties of her position, He enabled her to attain. She loved Him indeed with all the *naivete*, and invoked Him with the simple confidence, of a child ; and the last weeks of her life were almost entirely devoted to earnest entreaties that He would call her to Himself.

You are the first to whom I announce my loss, because of all those persons who have visited my house, you seem best to have comprehended the painful position of a deaf-mute, and the exquisite sensibility which they are capable of feeling towards any one who shows them sympathy and affection. I have already described Anna as she was when she came first among us,—a girl twenty-one years of age, with the stature of a woman and the habits of a child. I need not recall her to your remembrance as she appeared to you last year, a woman thoughtful beyond the common, and endowed with such true knowledge of God and of religion, that you deemed it no indignity to ask her prayers, and was pleased by her simple promise never to forget you.

Thanks be to God for His great goodness towards His poor afflicted child ! She not only learned to know Him and to love Him, but we were enabled by degrees to place her in still closer communication with Him, by means of those Sacraments which He has appointed to convey grace to the soul. The last confession which she made previous to receiving Extreme Unction reminds me of all the difficulty we had long ago experienced in persuading her to make her first.

“ It will soon be Easter,” said one day to her the Sister appointed to prepare her for this duty. “ It will soon be Easter, and then you and all of us will have to go to confession.”

“ What is confession ? ” asked Anna.

“ It is to tell our sins to the priest,” explained the Sister ; “ and to ask pardon of them from God.”

"But why should we do that?" quoth Anna.

"Because," replied the Sister, "God Himself has commanded us to confess our sins. You will have to do it therefore, like the rest of us; and when you go to confession, you must say in your heart to God, 'I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, O my God; and I promise I will sin no more.'"

"And what are the sins I must confess?" asked Anna. She was standing in the midst of her class, who had all assembled to receive instructions, at the moment when she put the question.

"You have been in a passion," replied the Sister; "you must confess that. You have broken M. Carton's spectacles. You have torn the cap of Sister so-and-so. You have scratched one of the blind children:—and you must mention all these things when you go to confession."

"All these things are past and gone," replied Anna, resolutely; "when I broke M. Carton's spectacles, I was made, for my punishment to kneel down; and," she continued, lightly passing one hand over the other, as if rubbing out something, "that was effaced. When I tore Sister so and-so's cap, I was not allowed any coffee; and," repeating the action with her hands, "that was effaced. When I scratched the blind child, I went to bed without supper; and that was effaced. I will not therefore confess any of these things."

"But, Anna," replied the Sister, "we are all obliged to go to confession. I am going myself, as well as you."

"Oui da! Have you, then, also been in a passion, my Sister? Have you broken M. Carton's spectacles, torn our Sister's cap, and scratched a blind child?"

Anna asked these questions with an immense air of triumph, and waited the answer with a wicked smile, which seemed to say she had put the Sister in a dilemma. Not one of the class misunderstood the little malice of her questions. Indeed, the uncharitable surmise as to the nature of their mistress's conduct appeared so piqu-

ant to all of them, that they unanimously insisted on its receiving a reply. It is not difficult, indeed, to imagine their amusement, for they were all daughters of Eve; and besides, the best of children have an especial delight in embarrassing their superiors. Altogether it was a scene for a painter.

"I have not been in a passion; God forbid!" replied the poor Sister, gently. "And I have not scratched or done injury to any one: but I *have* done so-and-so and so-and-so." And here, with the greatest *naivete* and humility, she mentioned some of her own shortcomings. "I have done so-and-so and so-and-so, and am going to confess them; for I know I have sinned by doing these things; but I hope God will pardon me, and give me grace not to offend Him again in like manner."

When the children heard this humble confession, they one by one quietly left the class, like those in the Gospel, beginning with the eldest; but Anna, even while acknowledging herself defeated, could not resist the small vengeance of giving the Sister a lecture on her peccadilloes.

"Remember, my Sister, you are never again to do so-and-so and so-and-so. You must be very sorry, and promise to be wiser another time. And above all other things you must go to confession to obtain God's pardon."

"And you?" asked the Sister, as her only answer to this grave exhortation.

"And I also will go to confession," replied Anna, completely vanquished at last by the tenderness and humility of the good religious.

From that time, in fact, Anna went regularly to confession; and so far from having any difficulty in persuading her to do so, she often reminded us herself when the time was approaching for the performance of that duty.

During the winter preceding her death she grew weaker from day to day; and her loss of appetite, extreme emaciation, and inability to exert herself, all

convinced us that we were about to lose her. She herself often spoke about dying, though for a long time she would not permit any one else to address her on the subject. If any of the Sisters even hinted at her danger, she would grow quite pale, and turn off the conversation ; and even when she alluded of her own accord to the symptoms that alarmed her, it seemed as if, like many other invalids, she did so in order to be reassured as to her state. She became convinced at last, however, that she could not recover ; and from that moment her life was one uninterrupted act of resignation to the will of God submission to His providence, and hope and confidence in His mercy. These sentiments never forsook her, even, for a moment. "I suffer," she used to say.—" I suffer a great deal ; but Jesus suffered more ;" and, embracing her crucifix, she would renew all her good resolutions to suffer patiently, and earnest entreaties for grace to do so.

Previous to receiving the last Sacraments, Anna disposed of every thing belonging to her in favour of her companions and then causing them all to be brought to her bedside, she kissed each one affectionately, and bade her adieu. After that she refused to see any of them again ; seeking only the company of the Sisters, and of that one in particular who best understood the silent language of the fingers. " Let us speak a little," the poor sufferer would often say, " of God and heaven ;" and then would follow long and earnest conversations full of faith and hope and love, confidence in the mercies of Almighty God, and gratitude for His goodness.

During these communications Anna would become quite absorbed, as it were, in the love of God ; her poor face would brighten into an expression of absolute beauty ; and she seemed to lose all sense of present suffering in her certain hope and expectation of the joy that was about to come in on her soul.

" A little more," she would often say when she fancied the conversation was about to finish ; " speak to me a

little more of God. I love Him, and He loves me. O my dear Sister, will you not also come soon to heaven, and love Him for evermore?"

Her agony commenced on the morning of the 26th of September, and she expired about noon, so quietly that we scarce perceived the moment in which she passed away (safe and happy, as I trust) to the presence of her God.

I recommend her to your good prayers; and I trust that she also will sometimes think of us and pray for us in heaven.